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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

REMEDIES AND PRACTICE

OF THE LATE

MR. ST. JOHN LONG,

NOW CONDUCTED

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OBSERVATIONS, &c.

HAVING become possessed of the secrets connected with the practice of the late Mr. ST. JOHN LONG, I offer the following observations to public notice, though aware that in so doing, I subject myself to animadversion from two classes of persons, namely, those who may be influenced by self-interest, and those who, though actuated by high and honorable motives, may still allow their better judgment to be biassed by feelings which should long since have subsided. To these latter I particularly address myself.

With past occurrences I am in no wise connected; I am not about to attempt the erection of any theory of my own, and still

less to support or overthrow that of others. I will state *facts* alone, and if those which I shall offer respecting my peculiar mode of practice shall be received as such, then my chief object will be attained.

Many objections have been raised against Mr. Long and his system; most of them I now believe to have been unfounded. The principal points were, that he was not a *medical* man, and that his remedies, and the mode of using them, were kept secret. As the first of these cannot in any way apply to me, I shall notice it no further than by saying, that science has often been indebted to others who, like him, were not professional. The second objection (if it be one) must, I fear, still exist; and the reason is, simply, that it was necessary to satisfy Mr. Long's executors in the sum of *ten thousand pounds*, before they would deliver up the necessary papers and documents to me.

Now I am quite willing, as in the following pages, to explain the system generally,

and the mode in which it is conducted, as well as the effects I have witnessed from it ; but I submit that under the circumstances I am fully justified in keeping secret the *particular* remedies made use of.

The principal art in the practice adopted by me, consists, first, in the judicious application and proper management of *medicated vapour*, and, secondly, in the external application of the *lotion*, as invented by Mr. Long.

The medicated vapour is used in two ways ; either by the process of *inhaling*, or by direct *external* application, as a mere local agent ; let us take them in order.

Inhalation is now so generally recommended, and its use is followed by such beneficial effects in many cases, that any detailed description or comment would be superfluous. Few families are, I believe, now unprovided with an *inhaler*, and the steam of even simple hot water has relieved numbers. But the process directed by me

is one of so much more extensive utility and application, and it is based on principles so different from those hitherto generally known, that the following brief explanation may be satisfactory.

I use inhalation not only for the ordinary purpose of allaying local irritation, as in some affections of the throat and lungs, or of exciting due and healthy action, in certain cases of relaxation in those parts, but further, as one of the means of placing the constitution under the influence of certain remedial agents, or, in other words, of introducing into the system certain remedies under a new form, and in a new mode.

No one doubts that vapour of any kind, when inhaled, will affect the lungs and their passages locally, and it is equally well known that some of our most valued drugs freely yield their medicinal qualities to vapour, as a vehicle.

In the present advanced state of medical science, it is unnecessary to take up time by

going over the proofs of absorption through the medium of the lungs, but for the satisfaction of non-professional readers, I shall merely state the established fact, that an atmosphere impregnated with the volatile parts of certain substances, will produce on the human frame, effects similar to those caused by taking a portion of such substances into the stomach ; for instance, an atmosphere loaded with mercury will excite salivation in a person confined within the limits of its range ; so with arsenical vapour, which will, under similar circumstances, produce many of the well-known effects of that poison. The effects of certain gases are daily witnessed, and the fumes arising from the combustion of certain vegetable substances, as from stramonium, or even tobacco, are in their way equally known and remarkable. Since, then, certain substances yield their active principles in form of vapour, and absorption is acknowledged to take place through the medium of the lungs, what is

to prevent the introduction of remedial agents through the same channel? Nothing but the want of patience on the part of the invalid, or of due discrimination of the proper remedies on the part of the attendant. The practice may appear novel, but it is certainly feasible, and I assert, that I can now affect many of the different organs of the human body, by inhalation alone, as I heretofore could by medicines taken into the stomach. It is true that I may not produce such immediate or violent effects, nor should I wish to do so, but I can produce the same effects in a more lasting degree, and without risk of debility. The kidneys, skin, and liver, yield freely to the inhaling process, and the alvine secretions improve in quantity and quality. By inhalation too, other organs than those I have mentioned may be acted on, *certain obstructions* removed, and healthy discharges obtained, even though other means may have proved inefficient.

The external use of medicated steam differs

not essentially from that of inhalation, except that I employ it solely as a *local* remedy, as in certain diseases of the throat, and ears, or in affections of the joints, particular ulcers, &c. It is perhaps still more useful in diseases of *certain passages*, encouraging healthy discharges, and allaying both pain and irritation. Even in cases of absolutely incurable diseases of these parts, the application is found to *check*, though it cannot remove the complaint, and procures for the sufferer during life a comparative state of ease. In a word, in all cases, even the most delicate, in which relief has been attempted or obtained from fomentation, the application of the medicated steam is much more efficacious, owing to the materials of which it is composed, and their direct effects upon the part diseased.

I now come to the *lotion*, that lotion which has excited so much surprise, and of the effects of which, such contradictory reports have been circulated. Numbers have extolled its virtues, while others have denounced

it as caustic and poisonous. I have used it extensively ; I have conversed with many to whom it had been applied ; I know the ingredients, and I unhesitatingly affirm, that *singly or collectively*, they are *absolutely as innocuous as the ingredients of any of the numerous liniments* in daily use ; and that to none of them can the term caustic or poisonous be with any semblance of truth or propriety applied.

As to its efficacy, whether in conjunction with the inhalation or alone, I need say nothing ; it has been openly attested by numbers, and I have in my possession many *unpublished letters* bearing similar testimony. So, dismissing this part of the subject, I proceed to state the different modes of using this lotion, and the effects of each.

It may be applied in two different ways, or, in other words, with two different views, namely, as a simple wash, or as a means of procuring a discharge of matter. Under the first form we shall now consider it.

The lotion is always applied by means of

a sponge, either over a small or a large surface, as the circumstances may require. When used as a wash no visible discharge takes place, no mark whatever is produced, even at the moment, except perhaps a transient redness. Not the slightest pain is caused; on the contrary, the sensations excited by it are exceedingly refreshing and agreeable. Applied regularly in this simple way, and over a sufficiently extensive surface, it not only produces a healthy effect on local diseases, but acts powerfully on the general system, as a safe, pleasant, and effectual tonic. This latter effect is apparent, not only in extreme constitutional delicacy, but particularly so in children, so much so, that I do not hesitate to assert its equality with, if not its superiority to sea bathing, over which it possesses this decided advantage, that it may be used in all seasons, and in all constitutions, without risk of any kind. If it be asked in what way the application produces such good effects, I answer,

that by exciting a new and proper action on the surface of the body, it creates or encourages a determination of the fluids towards that surface, and relieves the overloaded vessels by increasing the insensible perspiration, at the same time giving tone and activity to the capillaries; and thus, while it excites due action, it prevents or dissipates congestion, and perhaps some further influence may be attributed to the effects of cuticular absorption, whereby some of the mild ingredients of the lotion, or their principles, may be introduced into the constitution.

We come now to the application and use of the lotion as a means of procuring and encouraging a palpable discharge of matter. By the former process of sponging, we are guided to this ulterior step, for by it we are enabled to form a certain judgment of the exact spot from whence the matter is likely to flow. Let us suppose the lotion applied over an extensive surface, *steadily*

and *equally* ; of this surface one *particular* spot alone will exhibit the signs of a tendency to a discharge of matter, and this happens without regard to the different texture of the skin in different parts : on the contrary, it seems to depend on the presence or influence of disease, for it almost invariably occurs that these signs appear in, or close to, a part either evidently diseased, or else locally affected by constitutional disturbance.

The ordinary signs are these—the part undergoes an immediate and remarkable change of colour, shewing a gorged state of the blood-vessels, their exertions, if it may be so termed, for relief, and the general tendency of their contents towards the surface ; heat is evolved, the pores become enlarged, and by means of a glass one may easily distinguish a fluid ready to ooze out of them. From this part then, and from no other, are we to expect a flow of matter, and to such part the lotion is applied in the usual

way. The operation at first is unattended by any pain ; as it proceeds, some sharp sensation is experienced, but it is momentary, and ceases as soon as the discharge begins to flow, even though the operation may still be continued. The discharge issues sometimes in mere drops, at others almost as a stream, varying in quantity according to the different cases. It consists of a thin fluid, at first reddish, afterwards becoming pale and transparent. In a short time it assumes a purulent appearance, *without further pain or uneasiness*. On clearing this discharge away, we find the skin *not ulcerated nor abraded*, but *whole*, though delicate and red. In two or three days the exudation, *under the constant application of the lotion*, entirely ceases, the skin becomes as firm as it ever had been, and not the slightest mark remains.

I have here stated the general appearances and results. In some cases there may be variations ; for instance, if the same process be frequently repeated on the same part, (an

occurrence not very usual in my practice) then, a mark, but seldom a permanent one, is produced, especially in those places *not* exposed to the action of the atmosphere. In this operation then, the good effects which follow the process of general sponging are combined with those which are known to arise from an artificial discharge.

Every medical person is aware of the constitutional effects of certain periodical discharges, and of the influence of those formations of matter, which occurring during constitutional disturbance, and seeming by their formation to relieve the general system, are called *critical*; and every *practical* man knows full well the nature and operations of fistula, and of ulcers, in certain habits, as also the ordinary result of injudicious attempts to heal them; and in imitation of those efforts of nature, they attempt to procure similar effects, by means of *setons*, caustic issues, blisters, tartar emetic ointment, moxa, &c., and often with undoubted benefit; but *this lotion*

not only causes and encourages a discharge of matter, but does so, if I may be allowed the expression, apparently with the consent of nature, inasmuch as such discharge is not the product of violence, and is obtained usually from the immediate neighbourhood of diseased parts, or at least from parts exhibiting a predisposition to the secretion and discharge of matter.

I am aware that some very unfounded impressions still exist in the minds of a few, regarding the nature and effects of this lotion; I can not only say that I have never witnessed any unpleasant consequences resulting from its use, but also from my experience of its effects, and knowledge of its composition, that I cannot believe in the probability of such, under *proper management*. Inflammation, in the usual acceptation of the term, seldom or never takes place; should perchance a slight blush appear, then it is as certainly removed by sponging the neighbouring parts, or else by applying the lotion

directly upon the secreting surface, and thereby relieving the vessels, by encouraging a free discharge.

How weak and groundless then are the apprehensions of some respecting a remedy of such acknowledged power, and how unfair is the opposition of others, who deny that this remedy can be efficacious, simply because *they* may not happen to know the composition of it.

That professional men might *hesitate to recommend* the lotion for such a reason is not to be wondered at, and their conduct, while based on conscientious scruples, deserves respect, not censure ; but, on the other hand, open hostility and avowed opposition cannot appear to an unprejudiced person either liberal or scientific. I say this not only without intending any offence, but with perfect good will. There was not perhaps in the profession an individual who entertained stronger prejudices than I did against the very remedies I now advocate ; I was pre-

judiced because they were introduced and used by a person who was not "one of us," because I did not know their nature or composition ; because I heard of their producing effects which I could not even imitate ; because I was told of their effecting cures in cases which I should have considered beyond the reach of art ; and I confess that I was doubly prejudiced, because more than one of my own private patients came over to London, and were cured by the use of these remedies, when I had previously failed.

It has been stated that the most positive assurances of perfect recovery are given to those who resort to my method of treatment ; *this is not the fact*, for though I conscientiously believe that my power over disease is vastly increased by the knowledge of these remedies, yet I do not arrogate to myself the ability of removing *incurable* disorders.

In the foregoing pages I have aimed at being brief and clear ; I have avoided technicalities as much as I could, and now, to

make myself if possible better understood, I shall conclude by summing up, in a very few words, the rationale of my peculiar mode of practice.

It is simply this. By the inhalation of medicated vapour the active principles of certain remedies are introduced into the lungs, not only for the purpose of acting on the lungs themselves, but further, through their medium, of exerting an influence over other more remote organs and structures.

The stomach, instead of being overdosed and overloaded with nauseous drugs, is left to perform its proper functions, and the digestive process is unimpeded, while at the same time the lotion, extensively employed as a wash, causes by its peculiar properties a determination of fluids towards the surface, frees the gorged vessels, increases the insensible perspiration, and gives tone and activity to the superficial secreting and absorbing systems ; and in those cases in which a discharge is produced, then, a further benefit is derived

from the production and escape of such matter.

I have now given a candid and, I hope, intelligible exposition of my views and peculiar mode of practice. I could, if so inclined, easily extend the subject, and add to these pages; but my object is not to “make a book,” it is to remove unfounded prejudices, and to excite confidence in remedies which I believe are entitled to it.